

**Amendments to the Claims**

1. (Currently amended) A protective element in a pair of cycling shorts, said protective element comprising a double-stretch support of said cycling shorts with which at least one double-stretch padding is connected, said double-stretch padding being arranged at a crotch region of said pair of cycling shorts, and said double-stretch padding being applied at said crotch region of said pair of cycling shorts in an absence of stitched seams at said double-stretch padding, said support and said padding being made of a double-stretch material having the same characteristics as regards elongation along multiple planes.

2. (Previously amended) The protective element in a pair of cycling shorts according to claim 1, wherein said support made of double-stretch material can elongate along multiple planes, including mutually perpendicular ones.

3. (Previously amended) The protective element in a pair of cycling shorts according to claim 1, wherein said support has an elasticity of up to 30-40%.

4. (Previously amended) The protective element in a pair of cycling shorts according to claim 1, wherein said support is connected in said pair of cycling shorts.

5. (Previously amended) The protective element in a pair of cycling shorts according to claim 1, wherein said at least one double-stretch padding is an open-cell high-density padding.

6. (Previously amended) The protective element in a pair of cycling shorts according to claim 1, wherein said double-stretch padding is deformable in multiple directions, including mutually perpendicular directions.

7. (Previously amended) The protective element in a pair of cycling shorts according to claim 1, wherein said double-stretch padding has a density between 55 and 95 kg/m<sup>3</sup>.

8. (Previously amended) The protective element in a pair of cycling shorts according to claim 1, wherein said double-stretch padding has a density of 65 kg/m<sup>3</sup>.

9. (Previously amended) The protective element in a pair of cycling shorts according to claim 1, wherein said double-stretch padding has a thickness of 5 to 12 mm.

10. (Previously amended) The protective element in a pair of cycling shorts according to claim 1, wherein said double-stretch padding has a thickness of 10 mm.

11. (Previously amended) The protective element in a pair of cycling shorts according to claim 1, wherein said double-stretch padding is constituted by a first central element which is

arranged approximately at a tangent to an imaginary curved line of the crotch region of the pair of cycling shorts.

12. (Previously amended) The protective element in a pair of cycling shorts according to claim 11, wherein a second element is formed at a front of the crotch region of the pair of cycling shorts, and a pair of third elements are formed at a rear of the crotch region of the pair of cycling shorts, with first flat regions interposed, at transverse ends of said first central element.

13. (Previously amended) The protective element in a pair of cycling shorts according to claim 12, wherein said third elements are mirror-symmetrical with respect to a central plane which is longitudinal to said double-stretch padding and are mutually divided by a second flat region which accordingly lies at said longitudinal central plane.

14. (Previously amended) The protective element in a pair of cycling shorts according to claim 12, wherein said first flat regions, and therefore the dimensions of said first central element, said second element and said third elements are such that they are formed at a folding region of said double-stretch padding that is not affected, at said first, second and third elements, by any deformation during use.

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Previously amended) The protective element in a pair of cycling shorts according to claim 4, wherein said shorts and said support are made of the same material.

19. (Original) The protective element in a pair of cycling shorts according to claim 1, wherein said double stretch padding is connected to said support by a high-frequency or thermoformation or ultrasound application method.

20. (Original) The protective element in a pair of cycling shorts according to claim 1, wherein said double-stretch padding is applied only at points where resting on a saddle of a bicycle occurs and no padding is provided at any other areas of said support.

21. (Previously amended) A protective element in a pair of cycling shorts, said protective element comprising a double-stretch support of said cycling shorts with which at least one double-stretch padding is connected, said double-stretch padding being arranged at a crotch region of said pair of cycling shorts, said double-stretch padding comprising:

a first central element which is arranged approximately at a tangent to an imaginary curved line of the crotch region of the pair of cycling shorts;

a second element formed at a front of the crotch region of the pair of cycling shorts; and

a pair of third elements formed at a rear of the crotch region of the pair of cycling shorts, with first flat regions interposed, at transverse ends of said first central element.

22. (Original) The protective element in a pair of cycling shorts according to claim 21, wherein said third elements are mirror-symmetrical with respect to a central plane which is longitudinal to said double-stretch padding and are mutually divided by a second flat region which accordingly lies at said longitudinal central plane.